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ABSTRACT

The Illinois Council on Vocational Education (ICOVE) has recommended six needed actions for private-sector involvement in vocational education, as well as in the total educational process. The recommendations are a result of several efforts during the past 4 years. The council has monitored private-sector involvement in education both formally and informally. The council has asked private-sector representatives throughout the state how they work with education, why their efforts have succeeded,and why they have sometimes failed. It has also reviewed many innovative private-sector/education partnerships to identify key elements of success. Research studies and testimony presented at public hearings have been analyzed. As a result of these information-gathering activities, ICOVE identified six key actions the private sector might undertake to assist with the modernization of vocational education and the improvement of educational programs in the state: (1) communicate present and future work force needs; (2) share facilities and equipment in the workplace; (3) give educators job experiences in the private sector; (4) serve on advisory councils and share expertise; (5) verify occupational tasks for curriculum development; and (6) encourage education's role in preparing and maintaining the work force. (KC)

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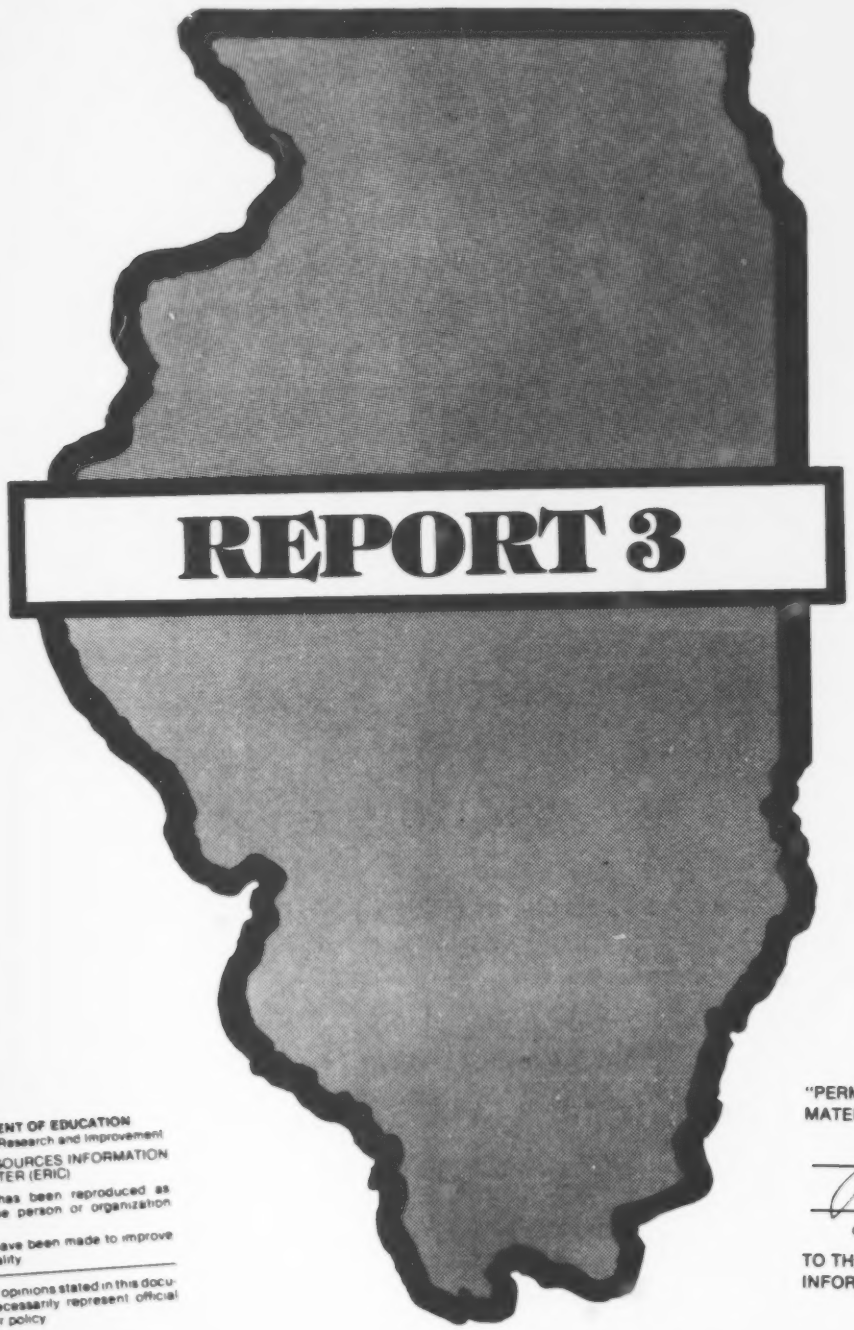
Advice to the Private Sector



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ILLINOIS COUNCIL ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
1987-1988

This report is one in a series of 25 technical reports prepared to fulfill mandates of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act, 1984.

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TECHNICAL REPORTS
1987-1988

Technical reports of the Illinois Council on Vocational Education in this series designed to fulfill the requirements of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act, 1984 include:

Report 1 ICoVE's REVIEW OF THE STATE PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTING EDUCATION FOR EMPLOYMENT IN ILLINOIS FY 89-90

Report 2 DIALOGUE WITH EDUCATIONAL LEADERS: IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY

Report 3 ADVICE TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Report 4 DISTRIBUTION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FUNDS

Report 5 ACCESS OF TARGETED POPULATIONS TO QUALITY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Report 6 EVALUATING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN ILLINOIS

Report 7 PRIVATE-SECTOR INVOLVEMENT IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Report 8 IMPROVING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION QUALITY

Report 9 ACADEMIC FOUNDATIONS AND APPLICATION OF TECHNOLOGY

Report 10 REDUCING THE LIMITING EFFECTS OF SEX-ROLE STEREOTYPING

Report 11 PREPARING AND MAINTAINING WORKERS

Report 12 SERVING ECONOMICALLY DEPRESSED AREAS

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Report 14 CONSUMER AND HOMEMAKING EDUCATION

Report 15 JTPA 8% FUNDS

Report 16 ADEQUACY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF JTPA

Report 17 PERCEPTIONS WHICH AFFECT COORDINATION BETWEEN JTPA AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Report 18 TECHNICAL COMMITTEES AND ILLINOIS CURRICULUM

Report 19 EDUCATION FOR EMPLOYMENT: WHAT'S WORKING? WHAT'S NOT?
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Report 20 PROGRESS TOWARD IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EDUCATION FOR EMPLOYMENT POLICY
(A Survey Report)

Report 21 REGIONAL DELIVERY SYSTEMS: OPINIONS EXPRESSED BY BOARD MEMBERS AND ADMINISTRATORS (A Survey Report)

Report 22 EFFECTS OF THE ICoVE 1986-87 STUDY OF THE COORDINATION OF JTPA AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Report 23 PERCEPTIONS RE: ADEQUACY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF CARL D. PERKINS ACT PROGRAMS IN ILLINOIS WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR LEGISLATION

Report 24 THE IMPACT OF STATE POLICY AND PRACTICES FOR EDUCATION FOR EMPLOYMENT

Report 25 CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION: A WAY TO STAY OUT (sub series)
- Monitoring and Evaluating the Services for Correctional Inmates (25A)
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- Recommendations for Illinois and a Report of the Anderson Study (25C)

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DATE: March 8, 1989

TO: Governor James R. Thompson
Lauro Cavazos, Secretary of Education
Elizabeth Dole, Secretary of Labor
Illinois State Board of Education
Business Community
General Public

With projections showing a pending shortage of qualified non-professional workers, as we approach the twenty-first century, it is vital to the very survival of our society that those in positions of responsibility who can see to it that these dire predictions never come to pass and heed the warnings while there is still time. Business, industry, agriculture, and labor share with the public sector in these highroller stakes. It is to them the charge must be given to show the way.

Report number three, "Advice to the Private Sector," has been prepared by the Illinois Council on Vocational Education to address both the need for greater private-sector involvement in vocational education, as well as approaches available to accomplish that goal.

The Illinois Council on Vocational Education respectfully recommends that upon the completion of your review of this report, as many organizations representative of the private and public sector as possible receive copies. It is our hope the report will serve as a foundation for positive action.

Sincerely,

Gerald M Sullivan

Gerald M. Sullivan

Investing in People

An Equal Opportunity Employer

REPORT 3

ADVICE TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR

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1987-1988

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PREFACE

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984 strengthened emphasis on vocational education – private-sector partnerships over previous federal legislation for vocational education. In doing so, Congress also gave additional responsibilities to State Councils for assessing partnerships and recommending ways in which private-sector involvement with vocational education might be enhanced.

The Illinois Council on Vocational Education is mandated by the Perkins Act to suggest ways the private sector can help to modernize vocational education. Specifically, the legislation states that the State Council shall

> ***advise . . . and make reports . . . concerning initiatives and methods the private sector could undertake to assist in the modernization of vocational education. [Section 112 (d) (2)(B)]***

Legislation also states that the Council shall "advise the State Board and make reports to the Governor, the business community, and the general public" concerning these initiatives and methods.

This report is prepared to fulfill the above mandate. In addition, ICoVE's series of Technical Reports contains Report 7, Private-Sector Involvement in Vocational Education which addresses two other private-sector-related mandates (i.e. the conduct of programs which emphasize the use of business and labor concerns and provisions for enhancing participation of local employers and local labor organizations at the local level).

BACKGROUND

Within a two-year time frame, Congress passed two pieces of federal legislation designed to assist states in preparing and maintaining this nation's workforce. Both Acts contained increased attention to involving the private sector in the planning, organizing, and delivering of public-sector education and training for employment. What brought this about?

Worldwide availability of new technology in the late seventies and early eighties changed the nation's market place to worldwide commerce. The United States found itself competing with foreign countries for its share of the market. The inability of American-based companies to employ technology to increase productivity cut into the country's competitive edge.

Layoffs and plant closings were commonplace. Unemployment was increasing. Workers unprepared to cope with the technologies were being replaced.

In the aftermath of the economic downturn, many companies were downsizing their labor force. Many dismantled much of their in-house training. Those who were laid off were not prepared to find employment elsewhere.

As the corporate world attempted to gear up for change, it found its existing workforce willing, but ill-prepared to adapt and learn the new technologies and processes required. Likewise, new employees fresh out of the nation's secondary schools, colleges, and universities were also ill-prepared.

The private sector has voiced its concern about the quality of education's product - the student. With shrinking numbers of young workers available to fill expanding numbers of jobs, particularly entry-level positions, the private sector reports it is hard pressed to find qualified workers to fill the positions.

Not only has the private sector voiced concern with the need for qualified new workers, it also reports it is struggling with maintaining its existing workforce. Over eighty percent of those who will be in the workforce at the turn of the century are already in today's workforce. The need to maintain these workers by equipping them to adapt to anticipated changes and acquire more sophisticated technical skills over the next decade is critical to the state's economic well-being.

Why does the private sector need to assist the educational community, particularly the vocational education community? Education needs an ongoing description of the ever-changing product that the private sector needs. Education understands that business and industry have changed, but it does not necessarily understand the changes. Education needs a clearer picture of what kind of work is being done in business and industry. Further, it needs to understand how work is being done, i.e. how work and the processes used to perform work have changed.

Education needs to understand how technology changes the life of a worker so that this concept, along with what that means in terms of life-long learning, can be communicated to students.

This report suggests several ways in which the private sector can assist in modernizing vocational education. The Illinois Council has elected to extend these recommendations to include not only vocational education, but the total educational community as well. ICoVE believes the need encompasses the total educational process, kindergarten through adulthood.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS FOR PRIVATE-SECTOR INVOLVEMENT

Action One: Communicate Present and Future Workforce Needs

Action Two: Share Facilities and Equipment in the Workplace

Action Three: Give Educators Job Experiences in the Private Sector

Action Four: Serve on Advisory Councils---Share Expertise

Action Five: Verify Occupational Tasks For Curriculum Development

Action Six: Encourage Education's Role in Preparing and Maintaining the Workforce

PRIVATE-SECTOR INITIATIVES NEEDED

INTRODUCTION

The six actions recommended for private-sector involvement in vocational education, as well as in the total educational process, are the result of several ICoVE efforts over the course of the past four years.

The Council has monitored private-sector involvement in education both formally and informally. Members of the Council representing the private sector have not only studied the issue themselves, they have also involved themselves with vocational education at the local level for first-hand experience. Members of the Council representing the educational community have been on the "receiving end" of private-sector involvement at the local level.

The Council has asked private sector representatives throughout the state how they work with education, why their efforts have succeeded and why sometimes they have failed. ICoVE surveyed local vocational educators to determine how they have worked with the private sector and what contributions the private sector has made to their programs. (See Report #7, Private Sector Involvement in Vocational education.)

ICoVE has reviewed vast numbers of innovative private-sector - education partnerships to identify key elements of success. Research studies and testimony presented at public hearings have been analyzed.

As a result of these information-gathering activities, ICoVE identified six key actions the private sector might undertake to assist with the modernization of vocational education and the building of quality educational programs throughout the State of Illinois.

SIX NEEDED ACTIONS

Private-sector involvement in education can and does occur in a variety of ways. With each of ICoVE's six recommended actions, a rationale for why involvement is needed is provided, along with a few suggestions for how the private sector can get involved. Suggestions are specific to both vocational education and the total educational system.

Action One: Communicate Present and Future Workforce Needs

Keeping up with social changes which affect education such as increased drug use, one-parent families, changing life-styles, effects of poverty on families,

dropouts and others is not as difficult for education as keeping up with changes in the workplace.

Educators are part of social change, but they are not part of workplace changes. As work changes, so must those who perform work. Education needs to be apprised of these changes in order to adapt curriculum to meet the needs of the current and future workforce. The private sector must communicate these changes to educators.

The impact of changes in the workplace brought about by such things as technology, computers, worldwide competition, participatory management and just-in-time manufacturing must be understood by educators if they are to incorporate appropriate concepts into the classroom. The private sector needs to communicate how the impact affects workforce needs.

The private sector needs to communicate the difference between the age-old "3R" concept of academic basics and the need for communication, computation, problem-solving, decision-making, work attitude, interpersonal skills, and others now considered by the private sector as today's academic basics.

The private sector should communicate to both educators and students what it expects and needs of workers. The private sector can be particularly effective in describing not only what is needed to get a job, but also what is needed to keep a job and advance in the workplace.

HOW CAN THE PRIVATE SECTOR HELP?

- Be open and candid in expressing needs.
- Participate as members of advisory councils, task forces, blue ribbon committees and other opportunities for communicating private sector needs.
- Attend school board meetings and express your views.

Action Two: Share Facilities and Equipment in the Workplace

Vocational education is often criticized for attempting to teach tomorrow's skills on yesterday's equipment. Classrooms filled with state-of-the-art equipment are neither possible nor cost-effective. The private sector can help vocational education by providing alternatives to classroom equipment.

One highly successful strategy has been the private sector's making equipment in their facilities available to education through demonstrations or, where feasible, actual hands-on experiences for students. Some firms have offered their training facilities when these are not in use. Others have been able to make training models and films available for student and classroom use.

Off-campus training is a concept being used, particularly by community colleges, in which occupational programs are scheduled in private-sector facilities. It affords students the opportunity to use equipment, observe equipment and safety practices in use, and experience the atmosphere of work situations.

HOW CAN THE PRIVATE SECTOR HELP?

- Assist educators in assessing the facilities and equipment needed in their programs.
- Offer the use of equipment and facilities to education when it is not in use by the company.
- Volunteer to demonstrate skills and procedures in the company to individual students or classes.
- Provide short-term work experience or employment to students to provide hands-on experiences with modern equipment.
- Suggest vendors who may be willing to loan equipment or provide demonstrations.
- Help educators locate excess equipment in the private sector that may be both appropriate and affordable.

Action Three: Give Educators Job Experiences in the Private Sector

Keeping occupational skills current is difficult for teachers. Many have not had an opportunity to return to a job in their teaching field to experience first-hand the changes that have occurred in the past few years. Many educators have not had an opportunity to observe or work in the private sector to update their knowledge of how work is being done, particularly new processes brought about by technological advances.

Participatory management practices have increased the roles of many workers. Educators can help students develop work habits and better understand worker responsibilities through their own first-hand experiences.

Guidance counselors who are helping students make career decisions are in need of on-the-job experiences to enhance their own knowledge base of the world of work. Many guidance counselors have little preparation or knowledge of the kinds of skills and knowledge needed to perform jobs in the workplace. Many do not know what jobs exist in the workplace, nor can they describe many jobs which exist today.

Administrators are responsible for the overall school curriculum. Internships can help them to better understand the world of work in which their graduates will seek employment.

Illinois has a program called the Vocational Instructor Practicum (VIP) which is designed to pay a stipend to teachers for working as an intern in the private

sector during the summer. The purpose of the internship is for teachers to update their occupational skills, as well as to observe "the new ways of doing business." Administrators and guidance counselors are also encouraged to participate to broaden their knowledge of the workplace and observe how education can better prepare students for employment.

HOW CAN THE PRIVATE SECTOR HELP?

- Sponsor internships for educators. Educators must seek their own summer jobs. Companies willing to work with schools can let schools know what kinds of experiences are available in the company.
- Involve both labor and management in internship experiences.
- Work with interns to provide a variety of experiences that will be beneficial to them.
- Point out processes, skills, knowledge, and attitudes that need to be incorporated into the school program.
- Suggest ways educators can incorporate their internship experiences into classrooms, guidance activities, and administrative functions.

Action Four: Serve on Advisory Councils – Share Expertise

Advisory councils are a long-standing tradition in vocational education. Advisory councils that have been actively involved in providing meaningful input, they have been highly successful. Councils may be organized around a variety of functions including program selection, curriculum revision or development, equipment and facilities, services to at-risk populations, guidance and counseling, or others appropriate at the local level.

Advisory council members are representatives from the private sector who advise the educators about educational programs. Other than vocational education, few educational programs have advisory groups. Some schools have entered into adopt-a-school programs with a company in the local area. The company helps the school to review its overall curriculum and seek ways of extending the classroom into the community.

Many services can be enhanced by advisory council involvement. Council members can help graduates find employment or help identify cooperative education sites, i.e. for student on-the-job experience. Advisory councils often assist with student organization activities and marketing of vocational education programs.

Activities of councils which have helped provide resources to the instructional program such as guest speakers, demonstrations, field trips, part-time instruction, tours, and instructional materials have been particularly valuable.

Advisory councils are needed to advise community college districts and vocational education regional delivery systems about the kinds of programs

they need to offer to prepare workers for available jobs. Councils can advise educators regarding needs for programs to help retrain, upgrade, and maintain the current workforce.

HOW CAN THE PRIVATE SECTOR HELP?

- Participate on vocational education advisory councils.
- Encourage personnel, particularly labor to work with advisory councils at the secondary, postsecondary, or adult levels.
- Assist schools to extend learning experiences into the workplace and help take the workplace into the classroom.
- Advise schools regarding program content.
- Advise schools about programs they should be offering.
- Advise schools about programs needed to keep the current workforce up-to-date.
- Advise schools about private sector, community, and public programs with which they should cooperate.

Action Five: Verify Occupational Tasks for Curriculum Development

Revitalization of vocational education curriculum is a major Illinois initiative. The process being used involves private-sector representatives employed in the occupational area. Representatives are asked to assist educators by verifying task lists which clearly reflect today's jobs in today's workplace. The task lists are used as the basis for revising and developing up-to-date curriculum materials.

The private sector can help, not only by identifying what occupational skills need to be taught, but also by assisting to identify the academic knowledge and the general work-related skills needed by those who work in the occupational area.

Private-sector representatives can offer suggestions for instructional materials and learning experiences which add valuable breadth and scope to programs. Rapidly changing technology causes curriculum to become outdated quickly. To keep up-to-date instructional programs in our schools, educators must rely heavily on those in the workplace who have first-hand knowledge of what workers need to know and be able to do.

HOW CAN THE PRIVATE SECTOR HELP?

- Say "yes" when asked to help verify task lists.
- Volunteer labor and management personnel to work with educators to identify tasks performed on the job.
- Suggest instructional materials and equipment helpful in teaching various tasks.
- Review existing curriculum and point out areas needing revisions.
- Help educators recognize anticipated future changes in the workplace.

Action Six: Encourage Education's Role in Preparing and Maintaining the Workforce

Until recent years, preparation for work was generally considered by the educational arena to be the sole responsibility of vocational education, which was an adjunct to the total educational process. Vocational education, for the most part, included skill development that mainly involved "working with the hands." Vocational education was considered a "good alternative for certain types of students." This concept of vocational education and its role in the educational setting remains prevalent in the educational community today.

Vocational education has not been particularly successful in communicating how it has changed, why it must be an integral part of education, or why academic education must be an integral part of vocational education. The primary reason for this failure is thought to be the lack of knowledge within the overall educational community about jobs and work in today's workplace. Much of education does not believe it has a role in preparing people for employment. More often than not, preparation for employment is viewed as a private-sector responsibility.

The private sector has criticized public schools for not adequately preparing students to be employable. For the most part, public schools have responded by trying to improve or increase academic knowledge, but failing to relate this instruction to work or real-life situations, thus not helping students make the transition from school to work.

Schools have accepted responsibility for preparing students to go on for more education, but they have not accepted responsibility for preparing students to go to work. The majority of the students remain in the latter category. One recent study reports that our society invests seven times more dollars in youth who continue into advanced education than it does on those who enter the labor force.

The private sector's encouragement to schools to make preparation for work part of education's role and responsibility is needed. Without clarification of this role in mission and purpose statements, it will continue to remain a low priority for resources, both human and financial.

HOW CAN THE PRIVATE SECTOR HELP?

- Communicate your views to administrators, school board members and boards of control.
- Educate educators about work in today's workplace.
- Suggest ways concepts related to work can be integrated into K-14 curriculum.
- Give input to academic teachers/instructors regarding ways to help students apply the knowledge they are acquiring.

THE WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY, AND HOW OF INVOLVEMENT

WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED?

- Input from varying levels within the company structure can add breadth and scope. Input is needed from:
  - workers employed in the occupation,
  - organized labor representatives,
  - supervisors and mid-management,
  - chief executive officers, and other management personnel.

- Representatives from various population segments can contribute varying needs and experiences. These may include:
  - workers with disabilities,
  - tenured employees,
  - new entrants,
  - workers returning after long periods of not working,
  - at-risk populations (women, minorities), and
  - retired workers.

- Whether individuals, companies, businesses, trade associations, or worker organizations volunteer their services, input is valuable. Sometimes companies or businesses form partnerships with schools and make their employees available to assist in any way possible. Individuals who wish to get involved can provide valuable input, particularly in their occupational area of expertise. Departments or groups within a firm lend specialized assistance.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

- Identify the goals of the relationship or partnership, (i.e. determine what is to be accomplished). Offer suggestions and "tell it like it is."

- Point out where improvements can be made and how assistance can be provided.

- Assist by targeting curriculum, teacher in-service, program offerings, skill development, instructional materials, equipment, or facilities.

- Participate by demonstrating to students, arranging field trips and tours, teaching a class, being an advisory council member, or helping solve a specific problem.

- Focus on helping students, teachers, counselors, administrators.

WHERE IS ASSISTANCE NEEDED?

- Community colleges, high schools, area vocational centers, university centers, and technical institutes.
- Secondary schools are organized into regions for the delivery of vocational education. Community college districts serve large geographic areas. Both can use advice from the private sector about needed program offerings and student services.

WHEN SHOULD THE PRIVATE SECTOR BE INVOLVED?

- When private sector needs are not being served by the educational community.
- When the private sector has a suggestion for improving education.
- When assistance is requested.

WHY SHOULD THE PRIVATE SECTOR BE INVOLVED?

- To benefit and assist in meeting needs of the private sector for a well-prepared workforce.
- To assist people to prepare for employment and maintain employable skills.
- To benefit those involved in education.
- To develop a quality system for preparing and maintaining the workforce.
- To maintain a current up-to-date vocational education with current and up-to-date instructors and equipment.
- To get the kind of product needed from the educational system.
- To apprise the educational system of future, as well as current needs.

HOW CAN THE PRIVATE SECTOR BE INVOLVED?

- Volunteer to serve.
- Served when asked.
- Contact vocational education personnel at the high school, community college, area vocational center, or university.

- Contact the director of the secondary regional delivery system.
- Contact vocational directors or career deans at community colleges.
- Contact other private-sector representatives already involved and offer your assistance.

APPENDIX

THE SKILLS EMPLOYERS WANT[1]

Recently released, *WORKPLACE BASICS: THE SKILLS EMPLOYERS WANT* summarizes a portion of the research conducted under a two-year joint project of the U.S. Department of Labor and the American Society for Training and Development. Seven areas of skills that employers want are listed below, along with a brief explanation and rationale for each. The report describes the "7 skill areas" as "a prescription for a well-rounded worker who has acquired a number of discrete skills and who has the capability to acquire more sophisticated skills when necessary."

The seven skill groups, including excerpts from the report's explanation of each follow.

- **THE FOUNDATION: KNOWING HOW TO LEARN.**
  The accumulation of knowledge in our society is respected and encouraged. But rarely do we, as children, learn the principles that prepare us to absorb and apply information effectively.

- **COMPETENCE: READING, WRITING AND COMPUTATION.**
  Basic academic skills--reading, writing and computation--have long been revered as the keys to success in society and the workplace. In theory these skills have been essential, but in practice workers have often succeeded because of "a strong back and willing hands."

- **COMMUNICATION: LISTENING AND ORAL COMMUNICATION.**
  Reading and writing are essential communication tools, but it is through listening and speaking that we interact most frequently. The average person spends 8.4 percent of communications time writing, 13.3 percent reading, 23 percent speaking, and 55 percent listening.

- **ADAPTABILITY: CREATIVE THINKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING.**
  An organization's ability to achieve its strategic objectives often depends on how quickly and effectively it can transcend barriers to improved productivity and competitiveness. These pressures put creative thinking and problem solving at a premium--at all levels of an organization.

- **PERSONAL MANAGEMENT: SELF-ESTEEM, GOAL SETTING/MOTIVATION, AND PERSONAL/CAREER DEVELOPMENT.**
  An individual's effectiveness in the workplace can be linked directly to positive self-esteem and successful personal management. A good self-image means the employee takes pride

in his or her work. The ability to set goals and meet them will become evident as production quotas are exceeded or deadlines met. Solid personal and career development skills are apparent in efficient integration of new technology or processes, creative thinking, high productivity, and a pursuit of skills enhancement through training or education.

- **GROUP EFFECTIVENESS: INTERPERSONAL SKILLS, NEGOTIATION, AND TEAMWORK.** In the past two decades, there has been a tremendous increase in the use of teams in the workplace. The team approach has been linked conclusively to higher productivity and product quality, as well as to increased quality of worklife. Change strategies are usually dependent upon the ability of employees to pull together and refocus on the new common goal.

- **INFLUENCE: ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND LEADERSHIP.** To be effective in an organization, employees need a sense of the workings of the organization and how their actions affect organizational and strategic objectives. Skilled in scoping out the forces and factors that interfere with the employer's ability to accomplish its tasks, the worker can be a master problem-solver, an innovator, and a team-builder.

[1]*Workplace Basics: The Skills Employers Want.* U.S. Department of Labor and the American Society for Training and Development.

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